

Exploring Classroom Management Practices among English Language Teachers: A Study of Private Institute Teachers in Ilam City

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of educational level on classroom management practices among English language teachers in private institutes in Ilam City. Specifically, it examines two dimensions of classroom management: discipline and teacher-student personal communication. Using a questionnaire developed by Díaz et al. (2018), data were collected from 30 teachers with varying educational backgrounds (Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D.). The study utilized ANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis tests to analyze the data. The ANOVA results indicated that there were no significant differences in the use of discipline-related techniques among teachers with different educational levels ($F(2, 27) = 2.033, p = .151$). Similarly, the Kruskal-Wallis test for personal communication showed no significant differences in approaches across educational levels ($\chi^2(2) = 2.589, p = .274$). These findings suggest that educational qualifications do not significantly influence classroom management practices in the areas studied. The results imply that factors other than educational level, such as teaching experience and contextual variables, may be more influential in shaping effective classroom management strategies. The study highlights the need for professional development programs that focus on practical skills and individualized support rather than solely emphasizing academic qualifications. These findings offer valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and administrators aiming to enhance classroom management practices and improve teaching effectiveness.

Keywords: Classroom management, EFL Teachers, Language Institutes, Teacher–student relationship

Introduction

Numerous researchers have highlighted the critical role of classroom management (CM) in the professional development of student teachers (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015). CM is widely regarded as an essential competence for those training to become teachers (Adams et al, 2022). Additionally, it is well-established that effective CM significantly influences the relationship between teachers and students, as well as students' cognitive and emotional learning outcomes (Wubbels et al., 2015). Therefore, teachers must be adept at recognizing key CM events and responding promptly, often with little to no time for reflection (van Driel et al, 2023).

Classroom management is a complex and multifaceted task that goes beyond merely setting rules, rewards, and penalties to control student behavior. It encompasses effective instruction, fostering a supportive environment, and implementing restorative discipline (Milner et al., 2019), all of which contribute to creating an orderly atmosphere where students can engage in meaningful academic learning (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). As stated by Henley (2010), classroom management is considered the "essential teaching skill" and is recognized as a critical pedagogical competency (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015; Ateh & Ryan, 2023) that includes both behavioral and instructional management (Martin & Sass, 2010) aimed at promoting students' intellectual and emotional development. Effective classroom management leads to successful instructional practices and enhances student achievement (Ateh & Ryan, 2023).

English has served as the universal language for many decades, making it nearly ubiquitous in education worldwide (Mahu, 2012). While English offers numerous benefits as a global language, it poses additional challenges for non-English-speaking countries, where it is learned as a second or foreign language (Larsen-Freeman, 1991). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms and beyond, certain elements are essential to making the learning experience engaging and effective for both teachers and students (Ababneh, 2012). The choice of teaching techniques and media plays a crucial role in determining students' progress in language acquisition (Fathi, 2018). Teachers are expected to carefully consider the key components of classroom learning practices and to deeply understand the philosophy of teaching (Benson, 2007). Teaching involves not only the transfer of information but also the cultivation of habits that become ingrained in students (Harris & Harris, 2019). Therefore, EFL teachers must prioritize creating a conducive learning environment over control or discipline, recognizing that this is their most important task in classroom management (Ababneh, 2012).

Literature Review

Nearly three decades ago, Brophy (1988) described classroom management as "the action taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to the attainment of instructional goals-arranging the physical environment of the classroom, establishing rules and procedures, and maintaining attention to lessons and engagement in academic activities." In Indonesia, the Ministry of National Education declared in 2013 that classroom management involves a set of procedures and skills enabling teachers to effectively manage students and create a positive learning environment for everyone. A recent study by Liu and Babchuk (2018) highlighted that classroom management involves the complex and dynamic interaction between students and teachers, aimed at fostering academic, social, and emotional development in the classroom. Therefore, "teachers must address unexpected events and manage students' behavior through effective classroom management strategies" (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016).

Two decades ago, Martin, et al (1998), categorized classroom management into three key dimensions: instructional management, people management, and behavior management. In a revised study, Martin, et al (2008) argued that these dimensions work in unison to shape teachers' classroom management styles and support their efforts to achieve instructional goals. According to Martin et al. (2008), instructional management encompasses tasks such as overseeing seat work, organizing daily routines, and distributing materials. The people management dimension focuses on teachers' beliefs about students as individuals and the actions they take to build strong teacher-student relationships. While behavior management is related to discipline, it differs in that it emphasizes proactive strategies to prevent misbehavior rather than reacting to it. Specifically, as Martin et al. (2008) explained, this dimension includes establishing rules, creating a reward structure, and involving students in decision-making. After some modifications, Martin & Sass (2010) developed a new framework for classroom management, consisting of behavior management and instructional management. In a study on evaluating behavior and instructional management, Sass, et al (2016), found that key aspects of these dimensions include student control, instructional style, rule-setting, and managing student misbehavior.

On the other hand, Sieberer-Nagler (2016) identified the most significant challenges in classroom management as discipline, student motivation, social and emotional issues, parental support, and violence. To maintain a productive learning environment, "it is also important to build goodwill, respect, and cooperation." Habibi et al. (2018)

emphasized that effective classroom management enhances the ease and effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Likewise, Billingsley, et al. (2018) found that classrooms with poor management, relying solely on reactive measures for student misbehavior, often experience a range of negative outcomes for students.

According to our data and knowledge, numerous studies have explored classroom management within the context of EFL and ESL classrooms (Aliakbari & Heidarzadi, 2015; Kazemi & Soleimani, 2016). For example, in research examining the connection between EFL teachers' classroom management strategies and their predominant teaching styles, Aliakbari and Heidarzadi (2015) found that these two aspects are interrelated. Additionally, Farrell and Bennis (2013) analyzed ESL teachers' beliefs about classroom practices by observing them in action, revealing that teachers' beliefs do not always align with their actual classroom practices but are closely tied to the teaching context. The study also highlighted the need for language teachers to critically reflect on their existing beliefs and how they implement them in the classroom.

In a study focused on challenges and coping strategies in EFL classroom management, Merç and Subaşı (2015) examined the classroom management issues and strategies used by Turkish teachers. The research highlighted that effective classroom management is crucial for a successful teaching and learning process. They also emphasized that effective teaching and management practices are among the most important factors in the educational process. Merc and Subaşı further suggested that understanding classroom management effectiveness allows teachers and educational researchers to develop more effective teaching strategies. Additionally, in a study exploring students' attitudes towards teachers' affective factors in EFL classrooms, Anwar et al (2016) identified that factors such as teachers' self-confidence, cultural background, attitude towards native English speakers and the language, lack of anxiety (regarding class and topic management), and motivation significantly influence students' English language learning. According to the objectives of this study, the following research questions were formulated.

1. Is there a significant difference in the use of classroom management techniques related to discipline among English language teachers in private institutes in Ilam City based on their educational level?

2. Is there a significant difference in the approach to teacher-student personal communication among English language teachers in private institutes in Ilam City based on their educational level?

Methodology

Participants

The study involved 30 English language teachers from private language institutes in Ilam City. The participants included an equal number of male and female teachers (15 males and 15 females). The age of the teachers ranged from 19 to 45 years, with the majority being in their mid-20s to early 30s. The teachers had varying levels of educational qualifications: 14 held a Bachelor's degree, 12 held a Master's degree, and 4 held a Ph.D. Their teaching experience ranged from 1 to 21 years, with a diverse distribution across different experience levels.

Instruments

The instrument used in this study was the "Inventory of Classroom Management Techniques" developed by Diaz et al. (2018). This questionnaire is designed to assess classroom management practices across three dimensions: Discipline, Teaching and Learning, and Personal Communication. The inventory consists of 60 items, with each item rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Rarely) to 4 (Usually). The Discipline dimension includes items related to establishing rules, handling misbehavior, and involving parents. The Teaching and Learning dimension focuses on lesson organization, student engagement, and instructional strategies. The Personal Communication dimension evaluates teacher-student interactions, fostering respect, and promoting a positive classroom environment. The questionnaire has been validated in previous studies and demonstrated good reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha for the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated at 0.66, which is regarded as an acceptable index.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected over a period of one month, concluding in late July 2024. The participants were English language teachers from various private language institutes in Ilam City. A total of 30 teachers participated in the study, representing a diverse range of teaching experiences and educational backgrounds. The questionnaire was distributed both in person and electronically to ensure maximum participation. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. To maintain anonymity, no personal identifiers were collected, and the data were used solely for academic research purposes.

Data Analysis Method

The data collected from the 30 participants were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Rarely) to 4 (Usually), to measure various classroom management techniques across three dimensions: Discipline, Teaching and Learning, and Person.

Results and Discussion

Question 1: Is there a significant difference in the use of classroom management techniques related to discipline among English language teachers in private institutes in Ilam City based on their educational level?

The results of the one-way ANOVA for the Discipline Dimension indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the use of discipline-related classroom management techniques among teachers with different educational levels ($F(2, 27) = 2.033$, $p = 0.151$). The significance level (p -value) of 0.151 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, leading to the retention of the null hypothesis. This suggests that teachers with Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. degrees do not differ significantly in their approach to discipline in the classroom.

Table 1: One-way ANOVA Results for the Discipline Dimension Among Teachers with Different Educational Levels

ANOVA

Discipline Dimension

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.277	2	.139	2.033	.151
Within Groups	1.840	27	.068		
Total	2.117	29			

Further analysis using Tukey's HSD post-hoc test also reveals that none of the pairwise comparisons between educational levels are statistically significant. The mean differences between Bachelor's and Master's degrees (-0.00119 , $p = 1.000$), Bachelor's and Ph.D. degrees (0.28214 , $p = 0.156$), and Master's and Ph.D. degrees (0.28333 , $p = 0.164$) are all non-significant. The confidence intervals for these comparisons also include zero, further confirming the lack of significant differences.

Table 2: Tukey's HSD Post-hoc Test for Pairwise Comparisons of Discipline Dimension Across Educational Levels

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Discipline Dimension

Tukey HSD

(I) Education	(J) Education	Mean Difference (I-J)		Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			Std. Error		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Bachelor	Master	-.00119	.10269	1.000	-.2558	.2534
	Ph.D	.28214	.14799	.156	-.0848	.6491
Master	Bachelor	.00119	.10269	1.000	-.2534	.2558
	Ph.D	.28333	.15071	.164	-.0903	.6570
Ph.D	Bachelor	-.28214	.14799	.156	-.6491	.0848
	Master	-.28333	.15071	.164	-.6570	.0903

Table 3: Tukey's HSD Subset for the Discipline Dimension Based on Educational Levels

Discipline Dimension

Tukey HSD^{a,b}

		Subset for alpha = 0.05
Education	N	1
Ph.D	4	2.3000
Bachelor	14	2.5821

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Master	12	2.5833
Sig.		.111

In summary, the educational level of teachers does not appear to influence the way they manage discipline in the classroom. This may suggest that factors other than educational level, such as years of experience, personal teaching philosophy, or institutional policies, play a more critical role in shaping discipline management strategies.

Question 2: Is there a significant difference in the approach to teacher-student personal communication among English language teachers in private institutes in Ilam City based on their educational level?

For the Personal Dimension, the data were not normally distributed, and hence, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to examine the differences in teacher-student personal communication across different educational levels. The results show that there is no statistically significant difference in this dimension among the three educational levels ($\chi^2(2) = 2.589$, $p = 0.274$). The p-value of 0.274 is greater than 0.05, leading to the retention of the null hypothesis.

Table 4: Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for Personal Communication Dimension Across Educational Levels

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test

Summary

Total N	30
Test Statistic	2.589 ^{a,b}
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.274

This result indicates that teachers with different educational levels (Bachelor's, Master's, Ph.D.) approach personal communication with students in a similar manner. The lack of significant differences suggests that personal communication strategies are consistent across teachers regardless of their academic qualifications. This consistency might reflect a universal recognition of the importance of personal rapport and student-teacher relationships in effective classroom management, irrespective of the teacher's formal education level.

Overall, both the ANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis test results imply that educational level alone does not significantly impact teachers' classroom management techniques in the dimensions of discipline and personal communication. Other factors, such as institutional culture, professional development, and individual teacher characteristics, may have a more substantial influence.

Conclusion

This study sought to investigate whether educational level influences the use of classroom management techniques among English language teachers in private institutes in Ilam City, specifically in the areas of discipline and teacher-student personal communication. The findings reveal that educational level, encompassing Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. degrees, does not significantly impact the way teachers manage classroom discipline or engage in personal communication with students.

The ANOVA results for the discipline dimension showed no statistically significant differences among teachers with varying educational backgrounds. Similarly, the Kruskal-Wallis test results for the personal communication dimension indicated that there were no significant differences in the approaches to teacher-student communication across different educational levels. These findings suggest that educational level is not a decisive factor in shaping the classroom management strategies of teachers, particularly in the dimensions of discipline and personal communication.

These results challenge the common assumption that higher academic qualifications necessarily translate into better or more effective classroom management practices. Instead, they point to the possibility that other factors, such as teaching experience, individual personality traits, or the specific context in which teaching occurs, may play a more critical role in influencing how teachers manage their classrooms.

Pedagogical Implications:

The findings of this study have several important implications for educational practice and policy:

Focus on Professional Development: Given that educational level does not significantly impact classroom management techniques, it may be more beneficial for teacher training programs and professional development initiatives to focus on practical experience and the development of specific classroom management skills. Workshops, mentorship programs, and in-service training that emphasize hands-on techniques for managing discipline and fostering personal communication may be more effective than solely focusing on academic qualifications.

Individualized Teacher Support: Schools and educational institutions should recognize that teachers, regardless of their educational background, may benefit from individualized support that takes into account their unique teaching style, classroom dynamics, and student needs. Tailoring professional development and support programs to the specific challenges and strengths of individual teachers could enhance overall classroom management effectiveness.

Holistic Approach to Teacher Evaluation: When evaluating teacher performance, especially in terms of classroom management, it is crucial to adopt a holistic approach that considers factors beyond educational qualifications. Observations, student feedback, and peer reviews can provide valuable insights into a teacher's effectiveness in managing classroom dynamics and fostering positive student relationships.

Encouraging Reflective Practice: Teachers should be encouraged to engage in reflective practice, where they regularly assess and adjust their classroom management strategies based on their experiences and student outcomes. This process of reflection and adaptation can help teachers continually improve their approach to discipline and personal communication, ensuring that they meet the diverse needs of their students.

Understanding the Role of Context: The study suggests that the specific context in which teaching takes place—such as the cultural, institutional, and socio-economic environment—may significantly influence classroom management strategies. Educational policymakers and administrators should consider these contextual factors when designing and implementing teacher training and support programs.

In conclusion, while educational qualifications are undoubtedly important, this study highlights the need for a broader perspective on what constitutes effective classroom management. By focusing on practical skills, individualized support, and reflective practice, educators can better equip teachers to handle the complexities of classroom dynamics and build strong, positive relationships with their students.

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